

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 310845Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3568

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 JAKARTA 11758

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: THE INDONESIAN POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE AT MID-RAMADAN

1. SUMMARY. THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE IN JAKARTA HAS, AS EXPECTED, DROPPED DURING THE FASTING MONTH. THE OCCASIONALLY STORMY STUDENT-CABINET "DIALOGUE" IS IN PERHAPS PERMANENT RECESS, AS THE MINISTERS' ANGRY CONFRONTATION WITH BANDUNG STUDENTS EARLIER IN THE MONTH CONTINUES TO HAVE ECHOES IN THE PRESS. GOVERNMENT EDGINESS OVER DISORDER HAS SUBSIDED WITH THE QUIET PASSAGE OF THE FUKUDA VISIT, AND ITS ATTENTION IS NOW CENTERED ON HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGN TO DO AWAY WITH ILLEGAL LEVIES AND PAYOFFS. THIS CAMPAIGN SUGGESTS THAT THE GOI, PROBABLY IN ANTICIPATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN NEXT YEAR, IS ATTEMPTING TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CRITICISM WHILE CONTINUING TO DISPLAY DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN ORDER. WE EXPECT OPPOSITION ELEMENTS, WHO ARE CURRENTLY WITHOUT AN ATTRACTIVE ISSUE, WILL AGAIN TEST GOVERNMENT DEFENSES ON CORRUPTION AND OTHER ISSUES WHEN THE MID-SEPTEMBER LEBARAN HOLIDAYS ARE PAST. END SUMMARY.

2. THE BREAK-UP OF THE AUGUST 13 MEETING BETWEEN TECHNOCRAT MINISTERS AND BANDUNG STUDENTS, WHEN THE LATTER CLAIMED TO BE TOO "DUMB" TO LISTEN TO THE MINISTERS AND INSTEAD PROCEEDED TO
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READ THEIR MANIFESTO, HAS TEMPORARILY AT LEAST INTERRUPTED THE PRESIDENTIALLY INITIATED CABINET-STUDENT DIALOGUE. ALTHOUGH DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL PANGGABEAN EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH JAKARTA STUDENTS, THE DIALOGUE ORGANIZER, MINISTER OF STATE FOR RESEARCH SUMITRO, SEEMS TO HAVE HAD HIS FILL OF THE EXERCISE AND WOULD NOT RESPOND TO A UNIVERSITY OF INDONESIA CHALLENGE TO HOLD A TELEVISED DIALOGUE.

THE PRESIDENT'S AUGUST 16 WARNING OF A FIRM GOVERNMENT STAND AGAINST THE STUDENT "MINORITY" WHICH ADOPTED A PREJUDICED ATTITUDE (JAKARTA 11034) HAS BEEN REPEATED BY KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL SUDOMO AND OTHERS. BANDUNG STUDENTS HAVE RESPONDED WITH CLAIMS THAT THEIR ACTIONS HAD MAJORITY STUDENT SUPPORT. AT END OF MONTH, SUDOMO COMBINED A FURTHER WARNING WITH AN INVITATION FOR THE STUDENTS TO ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE ILLEGAL LEVIES AND PAYOFFS.

3. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE GOVERNMENT'S STUDENT, INTELLECTUAL AND MOSLEM DETRACTORS SEEM TO BE WITHOUT ATTRACTIVE ISSUES.

A. REGULATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT (REPLACING THE UN-POPULAR GOVERNMENT DECREE SK-28) WERE ISSUED THIS WEEK BY MAJOR UNIVERSITIES UNDOUBTEDLY IN THE HOPE, THUS FAR JUSTIFIED, THAT THE FASTING MONTH AND UPCOMING LEBARAN HOLIDAYS WILL MUTE OPPOSITION.

B. THE SHOOTING INCIDENT INVOLVING GENERAL ALI MURTOPO'S SON (JAKARTA 10735) HAS FADED ENTIRELY FROM THE NEWSPAPERS AND WILL PERHAPS NOT BE REVIVED UNTIL A TRIAL, WHICH IS PROBABLY WEEKS OFF.

C. CRITICISM THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAS OBSTRUCTED THE PREPARATIONS OF DEFENSE LAWYERS FOR SAWITO KARTAWIBOWO, WHOSE TRIAL FOR ATTEMPTING TO UNCONSTITUTIONALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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UNSEAT THE PRESIDENT HAS YET TO BE SCHEDULED, HAS HIT THE PRESS. THE CIVILIAN DEFENDENTS IN THE BIZARRE CASE ARE, HOWEVER, UNLIKELY POLITICAL MARTYRS NOW THAT THE RESPECTED MAGAZINE TEMPO HAS REVEALED THAT THEY FIRMLY BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO BE REINCARNATIONS OF VARIOUS KINGS OF THE ANCIENT MAJAPAHIT EMPIRE.

D. THE POPULAR FORMER JAKARTA GOVERNOR ALI SADIKIN HAS REEMERGED IN THE NEWS AS THE NEWLY ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE INDONESIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, BUT THIS POSITION (AND THE MISERABLE RECORD OF HIS PLAYERS) IS UNLIKELY TO PROVIDE HIM A PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE PODIUM TO ADDRESS HIS OPPOSITIONIST FOLLOWERS.

E. CONTINUED MOSLEM RESENTMENT OVER ELECTION RESULTS AND IN PARTICULAR THE REFUSAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT UNION PARTY (PPP) TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION OF EAST JAVA PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE MPR (SURABAYA 401) HAS THUS FAR NOT AFFECTED THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR MEMBERS OF THE NEXT MPR, WHICH SEEMS TO BE PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY.

F. THE PRESIDENT'S CLAIM IN HIS AUGUST 16 ADDRESS OF A

SIGNIFICANT DROP IN THE NUMBER OF INDONESIANS LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL (JAKARTA 11034) IS BEING SHARPLY QUESTIONED AND MAY EVENTUALLY BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE. PPP PARLIAMENTARY FIGURE IMRON ROSJADI TOLD EMBOFFS THAT HIS PARTY INTENDS TO FOCUS ON THE INEQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENT AND MPR SESSIONS.

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4. IN THE ABSENCE OF MORE INTERESTING ISSUES, IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S CAMPAIGN TO CLEAN-UP THE BUREAUCRACY, CALLED OPERATION ORDER (OPSTIB), WHICH NOW DOMINATES THE PUBLIC MEDIA. DAILY EXPOSES BY THE UBIQUITIOUS ADMIRAL SUDOMO OF BUREAUCRATIC MISDEEDS (SUDOMO HAS PERSONNALLY CAUGHT POLICEMEN, IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS, AND TAX COLLECTORS IN THE ACT OF RECEIVING PAYOFFS.) HAVE BEEN GIVEN EXTREMELY HEAVY PRESS ATTENTION. SUDOMO HAS INTER ALIA DECREED A BAN ON TRAVEL BUREAUS ARRANGING FOR PASSPORTS AND EXIT PERMITS, ORDERED PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST THOSE RECEIVING ALLEGED PAYMENTS FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES, AND ANNOUNCED THAT LISTS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' PERSONAL ASSETS, PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE ONLY TO THE PRESIDENT, WOULD BE SCRUTINIZED BY OPSTIB. SUDOMO ON AUGUST 23 EXPLAINED THAT CLEAN GOVERNMENT IN INDONESIA IS A GOAL THAT CAN ONLY BE REACHED OVER FIVE TO TEN YEARS BUT THAT THE DECISIVE STEPS WILL BE TAKEN IN THE NEXT THREE TO SIX MONTHS. PRESS APPLAUSE FOR OPSTIB HAS BEEN MIXED WITH CRITICISM THAT MAJOR OFFENDERS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S UPPER ECHELON ARE GOING UNTOUCHED.

5. HIGH LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES, INCLUDING IN PARTICULAR

SHIFTING FONMIN ADAM MALIK TO PARLIAMENT, CONTINUE TO BE
THE SUBJECT OF MANY RUMORS, BUT A SIGNIFICANT RESHUFFLING
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DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN THE EARLY OFFING. A FEW WESTERN
OBSERVERS ATTRIBUTE DELAY OF OVERDUE TOP LEVEL
ARMY ASSIGNMENTS TO DIFFICULTIES SUHARTO IS ENCOUNTERING
WITHIN THE MILITARY, BUT WE BELIEVE LACK OF A PRESIDENTIAL
DECISION ON CABINET POSTS, FOR WHICH SOME OF TOP GENERALS
ARE CANDIDATES, IS REAL CAUSE OF DELAY.

6. IN SUM, THE FASTING PERIOD APPEARS TO BE GIVING SUHARTO
A RESPITE TO BUILD UP MOMENTUM FOR THE MARCH 1978 MPR
SESSION. THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO CLEAN UP THE BUREAUCRACY,
LIKE THE EARLIER EFFORT TO HOLD A DIALOGUE WITH THE
STUDENTS, SUGGESTS THAT SUHARTO IS NOT TAKING HIS 1978
RE-ELECTION FOR GRANTED AND SENSES THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE
IMAGE OF HIS ADMINISTRATION AT HOME AND ABROAD. WHILE
MINISTER OF TRADE RADIUS PRAWIRO'S COMMENTS TO CHARGE
(JAKARTA 11508) SUGGEST THAT THE GOI IS STRIVING TO
OBTAIN MORE THAN PUBLICITY FROM ITS "OPERATION ORDER,"
HIGHLY BRUITED BUT LARGELY INEFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNS OF THIS
SORT IN PAST YEARS HAVE BUILT UP DEEP POPULAR CYNICISM
WHICH WILL NOT BE EASILY BREACHED. WE EXPECT OPPOSITIONIST
ELEMENTS AND STUDENTS IN PARTICULAR WILL BEGIN AGAIN TO
TEST THE ADMINISTRATION'S DEFENSES IN THIS AND OTHER AREAS
IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THE MID-SEPTEMBER LEBARAN HOLIDAYS.
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